

H.

MATHEWS

Humpbacked Lover

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THE HUMPBACKED LOVER:

AN INTERLUDE,

In One Act,

BY CHARLES MATHEWS, JUN.

*Author of My Wife's Mother, The Wolf and the Lamb, The Court Jester,
Pyramus and Thisbe, Kind Intentions, Truth, &c.*

PRINTED FROM THE ACTING COPY, WITH REMARKS,
BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL, BY D.—G.

To which are added,

A DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUME,—CAST OF THE CHARACTERS,—
ENTRANCES AND EXITS,—RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE
PERFORMERS ON THE STAGE, AND THE WHOLE
OF THE STAGE BUSINESS,

As performed at the

METROPOLITAN MINOR THEATRES.

EMBELLISHED WITH A PORTRAIT OF MR. MATHEWS,
IN THE CHARACTER OF GEORGE RATTLETON,

Engraved on Steel by MR. ADCOCK, from an original Painting
by MR. BUSS.

LONDON:

JOHN CUMBERLAND, 2, CUMBERLAND TERRACE,
CAMDEN NEW TOWN.

REMARKS.

The Humpbacked Lover.

THE HUMPBACED LOVER is a fair specimen of those gay, pleasant interludes that fill up very agreeably the interval between play and farce. In such pieces, the interest centres in one principal character, who carries the entire plot and dialogue upon his shoulders—(Rattleton is quite able to do this upon *his* !); which character is written to suit the particular talent of a favourite performer. Sylvester Daggerwood, Blue Devils, and Mrs. Wiggins, bear as indelibly the impress of Bannister, Fawcett, and Mathews, as does The Humpbacked Lover the Protean characteristics of the junior Charles.

This gentleman, the comic scion of a comic stock, comes before us in the double capacity of author and actor. His burletta is as light as his person, as bustling as his manner, as smart as his dress and address, and as comic as his face. If it lack the thews and sinews of maturer years—the muscle that was the peculiar boast of Major Longbow, it is full of life-blood, and realises the soul of wit, by its brevity.

George Rattleton, the hero, loves a jest and a lady. He has a rival, one Mr. Grimshaw, of whom, in order to personate him, he borrows (French leave fashion !) a great coat. Now the said Grimshaw has a certain peculiarity—that is to say, not a peculiarity, but a singularity; a—scarcely anything—a mere trifle—a hump!—which personal addenda is fortunately suggested to Rattleton by a stuffed protuberance on one shoulder of the great coat, and a cavity of sufficient dimensions to contain nature's too bounteous superflux, on the other. Resolving to forego the flattering advantage of a handsome person, he waits upon his intended father-in-law, Sir Simon Snipe, and, in order to reconcile him to his hump, feigns to be an admirable Crichton.—This brings him into a variety of scrapes, out of which his ready wit opportunely helps him; and the shuttlecock of equivoque is knocked from one to another, until Hymen catches it, and puts an end to the game, which, having been played *for love*, is now played in earnest, by the marriage of the parties.

With no ordinary feelings of gratification we wish health and professional prosperity to the son of the late Charles Mathews. The *late* ! How many recollections and regrets are awakened by that one word ! The tear that we once paid to his pathetic impersonations we pay to his memory ; and now, when the voice of praise cannot reach him, let us, to the many already blooming there, throw a garland on his tomb.

Some years since we affixed to the farce of “Monsieur Tonson” a brief memoir of Mr. Mathews, with which we had the satisfaction to

know, under his own autograph, he was particularly well pleased. In that slight sketch we attempted a summary of his various talents as an actor, of his knowledge and liberality as a man of taste and a gentleman, and his virtues as a man.

Mathews was the Hogarth of the stage; his characters are as finely discriminated, as vigorously drawn, as highly finished, and as true to nature, as those of the great painter of mankind. His perception of the eccentric and outrè was intuitive;—his range of observation comprehended human nature in all its varieties;—he caught not only the manner, but the matter of his originals; and while he hit off with admirable exactness the peculiarities of individuals, their very turn of thought and modes of expression were given with equal truth. In this respect he far surpassed Foote, whose mimicry seldom went beyond personal deformities and physical defects,—a blinking eye, a lame leg, or a stutter. He was a satirist of the first class, without being a caricaturist; exhibiting folly in all its Protean shapes, and laughing it out of countenance,—a histrionic Democritus! His gallery of faces was immense: the extraordinary and the odd, the shrewd expression of knavish impudence, the rosy contentedness of repletion, the vulgar stare of boorish ignorance, and the blank fatuity of idiocy, he called up with a flexibility, that had not been witnessed since the days of Garrick. His most remarkable expression lay in the elevation of the eyebrow, which instantly gave to his features a totally different character. Many of his most admired portraits were creations of his own: the old Scotchwoman, the Idiot playing with the Fly, and Major Longbow, came as perfect from his whimsical brain, as Minerva from the head of Jupiter. The designs for his “At Homes” were from the same source;—meaner artists filled in the background, but the figures stood forth in full relief, the handywork of their unrivalled impersonater. Mr. Mathews was an eminent tragedian: who but remembers his narration of the story of the *Gamester*, his Monsieur Mallet, and particular parts of Monsieur Morbleu? Few comic actors have drawn more tears of emotion, or touched the heart with more exquisite tenderness. In legitimate comedy, his old men and intriguing valets were excellent; while Lingo, Quotem, Nipperkin, Midas, Sharp, Wiggins, &c. &c., in farce, have seldom met with a merrier representative. His broken English was superb; his country boobies were unsophisticated nature; and his Paddies the richest distillation of whisky and praties. He was the finest burletta singer of his day, and in his patter songs, his rapidity of utterance and distinctness of enunciation were truly wonderful.

His Dicky Suett in pawn for the cheesecakes and raspberry tarts at the pastry-cooks, in St. Martin’s Court, was no less faithful than convulsing; and Cooke, Incledon, Jack Baunister, and Bensley, were absolute resurgams.

He was the first actor that imported the ludicrous peculiarities of Jonathan into England, for the entertainment of his laughter-loving brothers and sisters. They were a species of humour perfectly unique,

and were relished with an epicurean *gout*. Their vraisemblance was unquestionable, and their effect prodigious.

Few men said smarter things, or related a comical story with more superficial gravity. Innumerable anecdotes are told of him. His first interview with Tate Wilkinson, the York manager, when the veteran, casting up his eyes to Mathews's tall, lank figure, exclaimed, "You won't do for *low* comedy!—and, then, your mouth is all on one side;" with Mathews's apt reply—"Is it?—Now it's all on t'other!" which instantly procured him from the humorist an engagement of a guinea a week. Many were his tricks of ventriloquism. His alarming the Brighton folks with cries of "Murder!" from every room in a house; and his good-humoured hoax upon that rubicund little bachelor, Tom Hill, of the blubbering urchin with a dirty face, under the cruel discipline of a coarse hand-towel and soap and water;—his strange metamorphosis at his friend the pawnbroker's, at whose house he had been dining, to whom—with a hat lightly dashed over his brow, an eye most wickedly winking, the mouth twisted, a screw (alias, a tooth!) loosened, and shoulders upshrugged—he pledged for twelve shillings his (the pawnbroker's!) own spoon;—and his adventure as the mock ambassador, as extravagantly ludicrous as the delicious episode of the Russian Princess, great Rusty Fusty, in O'Keeffe's wild farce,—are among the raciest of his frolics. We remember him at Covent Garden giving a fac-simile of Cooke in the entire part of Sir Archy M'Sarcasm, without making a single trip;—and a true tale is told of him, that, personating an eccentric old gentleman, a family friend, he drank tea with his mother—"O, wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother!"—without her finding out the cheat!

His manly spirit was not to be put down by ignorant and illiberal clamour. A Mr. Mawworm, at Sheffield, with sanctified garb and elongated visage,—an uncrossed cub of one of the Scotch beldams who pelted the bishops of Charles I.—held him up to censure, and libelled his profession; but he attacked the lank-haired, crop-eared Jack Presbyter in his strong hold, and belaboured him soundly.—And when a few Yankies, on his second visit to America, attempted an opposition in revenge for his vivid sketches of some of their absurdities, mark how a plain tale set them down! His judicious and uncompromising address shamed them into silence, amidst a shout of applause!

Of the Covent Garden Theatrical Fund he was a liberal supporter. He knew the importance and usefulness of his profession,—that to make the vivid conceptions of the poet start into life, to give feature, form, and motion to thoughts and words, and draw smiles and tears simultaneously from thousands assembled to hail the rare union of these sister arts, is the triumph of the player;—that the highest authorities have borne testimony to its moral influence upon society; and that it needed no vindication on the score of intellectuality, unless the infinite variety of Garrick be a fable, and the transcendent powers of Siddons and Kemble a chimera and a dream. He knew,

too, its many and sad vicissitudes ; that the broad sunshine of public favour is a dazzling and dangerous light ; that he whose presence is hailed as the signal for mirth—whose vivacity and whim seem to indicate all absence of disappointment and sorrow, is too often himself a prey to those very evils he labours so successfully to dispel in others ;—that, with a shattered frame and a broken spirit, he is called to the exercise of physical and mental energies—to be “ a fellow of infinite jest,” his “ occupation gone ”—to crave endurance, where he once commanded applause ! His versatile talents on the anniversary festivals attracted a large company ; and he was equally happy when appealing to his auditors in behalf of the “ poor player,” whose “ gambols, songs, and flashes of merriment,” are passed away, as when making their lungs “ crow like chanticleer ” with the drolleries of one in the zenith of his fame, admired by the public and liberally rewarded ; anticipating a long and brilliant career, and, ere the curtain finally drops, an honourable retirement in competence and peace.

No man was less a boaster than Charles Mathews. He spoke, and with complacency, of his comparative poverty ;—he had too much taste to be a miser—too much generosity to be rich ; he regarded wealth as the means of so many comforts, and there his regard for it ceased. Had he bequeathed his son a hundred thousand pounds, the legacy had kicked the beam in the balance with his good name.

A kindred taste for pictures, prints, and theatrical relics, often brought us into his company. His Tusculum at Kentish Town was crammed with curiosities and articles of virtu : Garrick medals in copper, silver, and bronze ; a lock of his hair ; the garter worn by him in Richard the Third ; his Abel Drugger shoes ; his Lear wig ; his walking-stick ; the managerial chair in which he kept his state in the green-room of Old Drury ; and the far-famed Casket, (now in the possession of the writer) carved out of the real mulberry-tree planted by Shakspeare, and presented to Roscius by the corporation of Stratford, with the freedom of that immortal borough. Kemble was no less the god of his professional idolatry. The sandals worn by that great actor in Coriolanus on the last night of his performance, and presented by him to his ardent admirer on that affecting occasion, were regarded by Mr. Mathews as a precious relic. He was glad of his sandals, he wittily remarked, since he could never hope to stand in his shoes ! The Penruddock stick and Hamlet wigs were also carefully preserved. So devoted was he to his art, and so just and liberal in his estimation of its gifted professors, that he lost no opportunity of adding to his interesting store some visible tokens by which he might remember them. These, with his collection of engravings, autographs, and gallery of theatrical portraits, (the latter is now the property of the Garrick Club) he felt no less delight in showing to his numerous visitors, than in possessing ; and when the mind had been abundantly recreated with the intellectual feast, the body came in for a substantial entertainment at his cheerful and hospitable board.

In spite of a nervous irritability, which his premature death too sadly proved was constitutional, he was the friendliest of men. The facetious companion never lost sight of the gentleman; he scorned to be the buffoon—the professional lion of a party, however exalted by rank. It was one of his boasts—a noble and a proud one, too!—that the conqueror of France, the Prince of Waterloo, received him at his table, not as Punch, but as a private gentleman. He had none of the low vanity that delights to attract the pointed finger;—he knew the vast popularity that his eminent talents had earned for him—that he could not appear in the streets without being among “the observed of all observers;” he therefore took the bye-ways, to avoid the (to him) painful effects of public curiosity. He was content with his supremacy on the stage—an universal imitator, himself inimitable.

Our last visit to him at Kentish Town was in the middle of March, 1833. “’Tis agony point with me just now,” he writes. “I have been writing from morning till night for three weeks. I am hurried with my Entertainment; my fingers are cramped with writing; and on my return I find twenty-five letters at least to answer. I shall be at home Tuesday and Wednesday; can you come up? Do. Very sincerely yours, in a gallop! Charles Mathews.—P. S. It will be your *last chance* of seeing my gallery *here*.” We accepted the invitation, and spent a delightful day. We saw him twice or thrice since, but never after did we behold him in such buoyant spirits, so full of glee, anecdote, and reminiscences of the old school, as on that joyous occasion. Our only sad moment was at parting—when we took a last, lingering gaze at his gallery. Then did his eye moisten, his hand tremble in ours, and his voice falter when he bade us adieu.

His second visit to America, the change of climate, and the severity of the voyage out and home, accelerated the progress of that fatal disease, which had been silently preying upon his constitution, already shaken by his long and arduous professional exertions. He never saw London again, but reached his native land just in time to breathe in it his last breath. He died at Devonport, on the 27th of June, 1835, of an ossification of the heart, wanting one day of fifty-nine years.

The curtain drops, and thus ends the busy scene of the actor’s triumph! What record remains of him, save that which tradition gives, and the painter’s art, that transmits his lineaments to posterity? Mr. Mathews was too celebrated not to have many portraits painted of him. One by Wageman, in *Monsieur Morbleu*, published in “*Cumberland’s British Theatre*,” is among the very best; and the same distinguished artist made another drawing of him in a private dress, with such singular fidelity, that we fairly battled for it; so anxious was the original to add this, his “true effigy,” to his collection. Farewell, incomparable humorist! In thee the stage lost one of its brightest ornaments; and could Diogenes revisit the earth, he might hold up his lantern, and look in vain to find an honester man!



MEMOIR
OF
MR. CHARLES MATHEWS, JUN.

MR. CHARLES MATHEWS, the son of the late eminent comedian, was intended for an architect, and studied at Rome for that purpose. What led him to the stage it is not our purpose to inquire : probably his father's brilliant career, the consciousness of his own abilities, and that their proper direction would secure him both fame and independence. He has not reckoned without his host : time and study will perfect what genius has so propitiously begun.

On Monday, December 7, 1835, Mr. Charles Mathews made his first histrionic bow at the Olympic Theatre, introduced by an address spoken by John Liston, his father's fellow-labourer and friend ; who, side by side, had for many years contested the palm of drollery with him. Nothing could be more appropriate, more kind, more affecting ; and the audience felt so : for, in spite of that incomparable face, that gravity and gusto, heightened by a costume of coachman-like dignity, many were seen smiling through their tears when the veteran led forth his adopted son. Sad were the reflections that crowded upon us : one child of glee had departed, and another must ere long depart !

The characters selected for Mr. Mathews's debut were, George Rattleton, in his own farce of *The Humpbacked Lover*, and Tim Topple, in *The Old and Young Stager* ; two new pieces written expressly for the occasion. His

entrée was hailed with thunders of applause ;—his father's merits were not forgotten, and his own soon caused the shouts to be redoubled till the roof rang, as in the palmiest times of the drama's glory. Mr. Mathews played the young spark with great mental, as well as physical, vivacity. His manner is sprightly and unembarrassed ; he treads the stage with the ease and confidence of a practised professor, and speaks and looks like a man of sense and a gentleman. His singing, which is aided by a rapid and clear enunciation, (the family peculiarity !) is excellent. Tim Topple the Tiger, a character of the broadest farce, soon told us whose son he was. We recognised in a moment the comic Timber out of which he was hewed. “A chip of the old block !” vociferated a hundred glad voices, as some queer look, knowing shrug, hitch of the breech, and odd indescribable, proclaimed his unequivocal paternity. The hits, many and good, were conveyed in stage-coach phraseology, with an occasional sprinkling of St. Giles's Greek, but applicable to the stage that goes without wheels, past and present. All that bore reference to the sun that had for ever set, and that which had just risen, were eagerly seized by the audience, and applauded to the echo. At the conclusion, the call for Mr. Mathews was universal. He came forward, led most cordially by the glorious *old* stager ; who, rich in laurels himself, hailed the triumph that placed one on the youthful brow of the son of his friend ! If, as some philosophers assert, the spirits of the departed haunt their former favorite scenes, great must have been thy joy, thou goblin grotesque !

Cast of the Characters,

*As performed at Madame Vestris' Royal Olympic Theatre,
December 7, 1835.*

Sir Simon Snipe Mr. F. Matthews.
George Rattleton Mr. Charles Mathews, jun.
Servant Mr. Hughes.
Louisa Miss Malcolm.
Lady Clifton Miss Paget.
Jenny Mrs. Orger.

SCENE—*Sir Simon Snipe's Country House, thirty
miles from London.*

* His first appearance in public.

Costume.

SIR SIMON SNIPE.—An old gentleman's dress suit.

GEORGE RATTLETON.—*First dress*: Fashionable dress coat—velvet waistcoat—kerseymere trousers. *Second dress*: A light great coat, the right shoulder wadded with cotton.

SERVANT.—Livery.

LOUISA.—Fashionable sarsnet dress.

LADY CLIFTON.—Fashionable blue satin dress.

JENNY. — Smart coloured muslin dress — French apron, &c.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

The Conductors of this Work print no Plays but those which they have seen acted. The *Stage Directions* are given from personal observations, during the most recent performances.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; C. *Centre*; R.C. *Right of Centre*; L.C. *Left of Centre*; D.F. *Door in the Flat, or Scene running across the back of the Stage*; C.D.F. *Centre Door in the Flat*; R.D.F. *Right Door in the Flat*; L.D.F. *Left Door in the Flat*; R.D. *Right Door*; L.D. *Left Door*; S.E. *Second Entrance*; U.E. *Upper Entrance*; C.D. *Centre Door*.

*** The Reader is supposed to be on the Stage, facing the Audience.

THE HUMPBACKED LOVER.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Interior of an elegant Summer-House—several doors leading to the garden, which is seen behind,—a breakfast-table, R.—bureau, with papers, L.*

JENNY discovered laying breakfast.

Jen. Dear me! dear me! Miss Louisa is determined, now she has left school, to make amends for all the time she has lost there. Nothing but dinners, balls, and flirtations! Well, I can't blame her; I should do just the same. Going to be married, too! Poor Mr. Rattleton! His case is now past all cure. I pity the young man from my heart! Such a madcap—so rich, too—and so desperately in love! But, then, what's the use of his telling me so? Why doesn't he go to Sir Simon at once? Ah! Perhaps he thinks that Sir Simon wouldn't deliver his letters so secretly as I do!

Enter RATTLETON on tiptoe from the garden, C. D. F., unseen by Jenny.

However, all the letters in the world can be of no avail now; another husband is expected, and so, good bye to Mr. Rattleton!

Rat. [*Advancing, L.*] Good bye, indeed!—Why, you haven't said, How d'ye do? yet.

Jen. (c.) Dear! how you made me jump!

Rat. To be sure; I make every one jump. I've been hunting for you high and low.

Jen. And now you have found me, run away again as fast as you can.

Rat. Run away! nonsense! I never did such a thing in my life. Why, now, Jenny, how could I possibly avoid coming? Didn't you send me word that my charming Louisa was going to be sacrificed?

Jen. Sacrificed!—No, sir; she's going to be married.

Rat. Precisely the same thing, if I am not the husband.

Jen. Then declare yourself: she can't marry you, if you remain invisible.

Rat. Very true; I should, at least, have made myself known, but how was it to be done? I meet your mistress for the first time at the play, where I behold nothing but herself, and she beholds everything—but me. Is that my fault? I learn that she is an orphan, and mistress of her fortune, but under the Argus eyes of a dragon in petticoats, confined in the dungeons of a ladies' school. There I lay siege—parade up and down before the barred windows by the hour,—all in vain: “No admission except on business!” But no matter. I pop upon a dear, good-natured little soul, named Jenny, who kindly undertakes to deliver my letters; answers refused—foiled again, but never despair; that's quite out of my way. At length, Louisa quits school; my hopes revive, when, alas! I find that she is going to be married to another. Now I'll just ask you, ought I to expect this, after waiting six months, all love and constancy?

Jen. Constant for six months! A tremendous effort, upon my word, sir! And is there anything so amazing to boast of in that?

Rat. No; I don't boast of it, but it's very well. Now, tell me, have my letters produced any impression? Do you think she's at all inclined to love me?

Jen. Why, I really think, sir, she has some inclination; for, whenever they're delayed, I can see her constantly fidgetting—

Rat. Of course; I know she must. But her intended—

Jen. Oh! a Mr. Grimshaw; a young man of merit, they say, but whom she has never seen, any more than yourself. It's a marriage of interest—family arrangements, and all that;—she obeys, because we ladies always obey—before marriage; but I'd lay a wager, after all, that Miss Louisa wouldn't break her heart, if any scheme could be hit upon to break off the match.

Rat. Say you so? It's done!

Jen. Sir!

Rat. Yes; that's the very thing that brings me here, and this opportunity shall not be let slip.

Jen. Why, what method can you have devised?

Rat. A charming one, Jenny; quite theatrical and romantic.

Jen. Well, that will be something extraordinary.

Rat. No, not a bit of it ; the most simple thing in the world—nothing so common.

Jen. Indeed!—Then why don't you choose something new?

Rat. Why, in the first place, because it's not so easy to find, and, next, because this is invariably successful. Last night, for instance, at the play, in two pieces, the lovers employed no other means, which, as usual, failed not ; for, at the close of the evening, they were all married.

Jen. Oh ! do let me hear !

Rat. Well, then, how do you account for Louisa's indifference towards me?—How do you account for the indifference of Sir Simon ? Nothing can be more obvious—they have never seen me ! Well, my plan is, that I should present myself, according to the good old stage custom, in place of the intended Grimshaw. D'ye see ? At the first glance, I achieve the conquest of the niece, and begin that of the uncle ; all his opinions are mine : I ride on horseback, or have a decided preference for gigs ; doat upon walking and thick shoes, &c. ; I'm in ecstasy with his gardens ; exchange Don Juan for Thomson's Seasons ; love whist, or think nothing equal to " Beggar my Neighbour." In short, I'm his flattering echo.

Jen. What we in the country call a Toady.

Rat. Well, the result. I gain his confidence, his esteem, his friendship—he can't do without me ; I am necessary to his very existence ;—and when the real Grimshaw, the real Simon Pure, arrives, behold uncle disappointed, niece agitated—both hesitating, dreading to find me an impostor ; till at last, after a few tragedy scenes, the niece exclaiming with Sigismund,

" He brings Earl Osmond to receive my vows :

Oh, dreadful change !—For Tancred, haughty Osmond !"

Sir Simon refers the matter to Louisa, and desires her to choose between us ;—she blushes modestly, but, following the dictates of her tender heart, gracefully extends to me her lily hand. I kneel at her feet ; uncle in the centre blesses us ; group, and " tableau vivant !" —Exit Grimshaw in a rage ! Our marriage celebrated, the piece ends, and my happiness begins !

[Crosses to R.

Jen. Upon my word, sir, you are settling it all your own way ; but I am afraid you are reckoning without your host. Besides, how are you to assume the voice and manner of a person you have never seen ?

Rat. Where is the necessity for that, since neither Louisa nor her uncle, you say, have seen him any more than myself? I'll present myself this very moment; run and announce "Mr. Grimshaw!"

Jen. What! in that dress?

Rat. Why not?

Jen. Why, they would think you had travelled down in a band-box, rather than a stage-coach.

Rat. What! is he coming by the coach? Lover—booked per Telegraph! Confound it! I never thought of the journey.—How stupid!—What's to be done?

Jen. Oh! such a capital thought! At the park lodge, there is a great-coat and a carpet-bag belonging to Mr. Grimshaw himself, left there by his servant to await his arrival. Suppose you were to make use of them? Then you could represent him to the life.

Rat. Excellent!—I'm off!—But, stay; I had nearly forgotten—I'm in such an ecstasy. Here's a note for your mistress, explaining my plans; I hope it will be the last I shall have occasion for;—here it is, and [*Kissing her.*] there's the postscript! [*Exit, c. d. f.*]

Jen. [*Calling after him.*] Sir! sir! am I to tell of the postscript? [*Arranging the breakfast things.*] Well, my mistress may say what she likes, but if I were in her place, I know what—To be sure, tastes differ. [*Looking off, L.*] Oh, here comes my mistress. What a pity Mr. Rattleton hadn't waited a minute longer!—He might have begun his acquaintance.

Enter LOUISA, thoughtfully, L.

Lou. [*Aside.*] More than a fortnight has now elapsed, and still no letter! Ah! I fear he must have forgotten me!

Jen. [*Approaching her with an air of mystery.*] Miss—miss! I'm very glad Sir Simon isn't down yet.

Lou. Why, Jenny? what's the matter?

Jen. Oh! such events have taken place! First of all, there's a note from—you know who.

Lou. [*Joyfully.*] From him! [*Checking herself.*] I mean, from Mr. Rattleton? But didn't I forbid you to receive any more? It was all very well at school; but here, in my uncle's house—

Jen. Yes, miss; only I thought, as this was to be the last—

Lou. [*Snatching the note.*] The last!

Jen. Yes, miss. Besides, he gave it me himself, and you know it's very difficult to refuse people face to face. I wish you could see him—so amiable, so generous, and such a way with him! In short, miss, you have read his letters, but you have no notion of his postscripts! You should take his meaning as I have done—by word of mouth. Oh! he'd make a great impression on you!

Lou. [*Having read the note.*] What extravagance! — Present himself under a false name! Does he flatter himself that I will permit such a deception?

Jen. Oh! all you have to do is, to keep the secret.

Lou. Well, Jenny; but if anything should lead to a discovery, I warn you I shall disavow the whole.

Sir Simon. [*Without, L.*] Very well—very well! — Prepare his room directly.

Jen. Hush! here's Sir Simon!

Enter SIR SIMON SNIPE, L.

Sir S. [*Entering.*] Negligent blockheads! they must be told every thing! — Ah! Louisa, my dear! good morning!

Lou. What's the matter, uncle?

Sir S. Oh! nothing—nothing! They had forgotten to get ready the room for Grimshaw; and because I wasn't quite certain of the day of his arrival, they were going to leave it to the last moment; so I was scolding them a little, that's all.

Jen. Breakfast is quite ready, sir.

Sir S. Come, then, Louisa, let's fall to. [*They sit at breakfast—Jenny waiting.*] I'm pleased to see, that since we have been expecting a suitor, we have been more attentive to our morning toilette—eh?

Lou. Indeed, now, uncle, I declare——

Sir S. Well, well, there's no harm, child—there's no harm; one should never be taken by surprise;—and, by the bye, for that very reason, I want to have a little chat with you about your intended husband. [*Embarrassed.*] I want to inform you of a little circumstance——

Lou. What, sir! doesn't the match please you?

Sir S. Hoity toity! not please me, indeed!—Why, isn't it my own making? No, no; I'm all delight at the idea! But I've just received a letter from Grimshaw's father in London; in which my old friend mentions a peculiarity—that is to say, not a peculiarity, but rather a singularity about his son, of which it is well you should be

informed; and, in fact, I'm almost sorry he didn't speak of it before.

Lou. What can it be, sir?

Sir S. Scarcely any thing—a mere trifle; particularly for you, who care more for the mind than any exterior consideration.

Lou. Ah! I guess: he's hideously ugly!

Sir S. No, no—not at all! How you fly away! The father assures me, on the contrary, that he's particularly good-looking—agreeable countenance, but — [*Aside.*]—Deuce take me if I know how to tell her! [*Aloud.*] But, you see—his figure——

Lou. His figure!

Sir S. Is also very good;—oh, yes, he's a very good figure!

Jen. [*Aside.*] What is he driving at?

Sir S. That is to say, when I say a good figure, I mean——

Lou. What! is it possible he can be——

Sir S. No, no—not exactly; but it seems he doesn't carry himself very well, so that you would at first sight be led to suppose that he was——

Jen. La, miss! he's a humpback!

Sir S. You've hit it, Jenny, and so it's out! But you know there are humps of all sizes and degrees, and I am assured that his is by no means disagreeable.

Lou. [*Aside.*] And Mr. Rattleton is unacquainted with the circumstance! What a situation! Jenny!

Jen. [*Apart to her.*] Oh! I understand but too well, miss, and am half dead with fright! [*Attempting to steal off.*] If I could——

Sir S. Jenny, where are you gliding to?

Jen. I wasn't gliding, Sir Simon; I was going for some more cream.

Sir S. Pooh! stay where you are; there's plenty here. Well, Louisa, what's the matter? Why, surely, this little blemish hasn't terrified you? Come, come, you will see Mr. Grimshaw, and hear him speak, before you judge of him. For my part, I can't see why humpbacks should be out of vogue, for they generally possess wit enough to make you forget their deformity.

Jen. [*Aside.*] Oh, dear! what is to be done? All I hope is, that Mr. Rattleton will abandon the idea, and not make his appearance.

Enter a SERVANT, L.

Ser. Mr. Grimshaw, sir, has just arrived, and is waiting to see you. *[Exit, L.*

Sir S. Grimshaw!—Can it be?—It was high time I prepared for him. Right welcome shall he be! Come, Louisa, let's go and receive him.

Lou. I hope, uncle, you'll allow me to retire, for the agitation—the emotion—*[Aside to Jenny.]* You see, Jenny, what you've brought upon us! *[To Sir Simon.]* I hope, sir, should any thing happen, you will believe that I know nothing at all about it. *[Exit, R.*

Sir S. Bless me! what's the matter now? Jenny, do you know what she means?

Jen. Me, Sir Simon! I'm sure I never could have supposed—besides, I don't know any thing about it—and I'm sure it wasn't me that wished——

Sir S. Why, what the devil's the matter with you both? I begin to think the arrival of this humpback has driven every body mad!

Enter GEORGE RATTLETON, L., attired in a light great coat, with a moderately sized hump on the left shoulder—Jenny hides her face in her hands.

Rat. *[Running to Sir Simon, and seizing his hand.]* Ah! my dear Sir Simon! at last I shake you by the hand!

Sir S. Right welcome to Snipe Hall!

Jen. *[Aside.]* Mercy on me! can I believe my eyes:—He must be a conjuror!

Rat. Come, Sir Simon, one more shake. Gad! I thought I should never get here: so much good byeing, and pleasant journeying, and happy auguring; then bad roads, slow coachmen, and all the horrors of getting over the ground—'twas endless. However, here I am, delighted to see you, charmed with your place, dying to see your niece, and—Egad! first of all, though, *[To Jenny.]* Josephine, you must run and—Is your name Josephine?

Jen. No, sir; Jenny, at your service.

Rat. Oh, Jenny! very good. Then, Jenny, you must run and get me a little rose-water, to wash the dust out of my eyes.

Sir S. And so it is really yourself that I see at last—eh?

Rat. Most certainly, unless they have changed me on the road.

Sir S. Well, I was just expecting you; for it was only

a day or two ago that I had a letter from your father, saying that you would be here at the end of the week, and to-day is Saturday.

Rat. Oh! what, he said I should arrive on Saturday?

[*Aside.*] Gad! that was lucky, however!

Sir S. Yes, indeed; and, a propos, he spoke to me of something, which I had totally forgotten. [*Searching his pockets.*] Where can I have put his letter?

Rat. Oh! never mind that now—you'll find it. Besides, I know all he'd say.

Sir S. Oh! I recollect; I put it there among my papers.

[*Sir Simon goes to the bureau, L., and searches for the letter—Jenny cautiously approaches Rattleton.*]

Jen. Can it really be you, sir?

Rat. Most unquestionably: a new edition, revised, corrected, and [*Showing his hump.*] considerably augmented!

Jen. But who could have told you?

Rat. Why, Grimshaw's coat, that you made me put on. The right shoulder wadded with cotton, and the left offering a cavity, evidently intended to be filled up in some other way: it struck me at once; I must have been blind not to have guessed that my friend Grimshaw was a—
[*Sir Simon comes forward.*] Well, Sir Simon, what, you've found it—eh?

[*Exit Jenny with the breakfast things, R.*]

Sir S. Yes, here it is. He begins by informing me of your little peculiarity.

Rat. My what?—My peculiarity!—Why, what does he mean by that?—What peculiarity?

Sir S. Oh, you know—the little—eh? You must be aware that there is a slight—an unusual projection, as it were, in your figure;—that you are not quite so well made as——

Rat. Not well made, do you call me? Oh! come, there you're mistaken; for I think I am remarkably well made—for a humpback! [*Aside.*] Joe Miller! I thank thee!

Sir S. Oh, aye! [*Aside, laughing.*] Ha! ha! ha!—Come, the dog has wit, though. I see I shall like him! [*Aloud.*] Well, he then proceeds thus. [*Reading.*] “*I have just written to him from London*”—speaking of you, you know.

Rat. Yes, he did. Go on.

Sir S. [*Reading.*] “*Telling him to repair to Snipe*

Hall, and there to await my arrival, which will probably be at the end of the month."

Rat. [*Aside.*] The devil it will! Then I've no time to lose.

Sir S. He then announces to me a pleasing surprise in the shape of another charming visitor, a friend of your family; it was of her I was about to speak. I suppose you guess the person he alludes to—a certain pretty, gay, young widow.

Rat. Why, really, I know so many gay young widows—

Sir S. Oh, no, I forgot; she retired with her husband to their country-seat before you returned from abroad.

Rat. [*Aside.*] Kind soul! how considerate of her!

Sir S. However, if she stops here a few days, as I hope, you'll be enchanted with her.

Rat. Oh! I dare say she's very amiable, and all that; but, between you and I, I detest what the world calls charming society.

Sir S. Dear me, that's bad! Now I doat upon it, particularly in the country.

Rat. Oh, aye, in the country, I grant you! [*Aside.*] I mustn't differ from the old gentleman. [*Aloud.*] I only meant to say, that in such company as yours, and that of your amiable niece, with your talent and her beauty, any auxiliary must be superfluous. As for myself, my father never spoiled me: "No," said he; "let your personal attractions be ever so great"—for he never flattered me—"you must call in the assistance of talents and accomplishments, if you wish to please." And may I take the liberty of inquiring of what nature are those to which Louisa gives the preference?

Sir S. To be sure you may—I am delighted. First of all, then, she is passionately fond of drawing.

Rat. Is she?—How lucky!—It's the thing of all others in which I excel; I've a natural sentiment for the beautiful; I love to study fine forms and proportions.

Sir S. [*Aside.*] Then you must take care never to look in the glass! [*Aloud.*] Well, next to drawing, she delights in singing—she doats upon singing.

Rat. So do I!

Sir S. Yes, but I suspect you will hardly be able to satisfy her taste there; for nothing will do but Italian.

Rat. Oh, of course not; Italian's the fashion. How well we shall agree! Not able, eh? If I hadn't such a

cold, I'd give you a specimen. Why, do you know, I'm an Italian opera in myself.

Sir S. [Aside.] You are a conceited puppy in yourself!

Rat. Well, proceed.

Sir S. I don't know whether her other favourites will suit you as well—dancing, for instance.

Rat. What! is she fond of dancing? I'm charmed!—You must know I dance enchantingly.

Sir S. [Aside.] Why, the fellow will make himself out an admirable Crichton presently!

Rat. I pay myself no compliment now, I assure you; it's no merit of mine. I've taken lessons of all the best masters, and have run away with all their talents. Fine calf, fantastic toe, etcetera. Perrot! pooh! Indeed, this winter, at all the balls, I have been an object of general remark.

Sir S. [Aside.] Aye, that I'll willingly believe!

Rat. You should see my pirouette! If I hadn't my boots on, I'd astonish you: I'd turn round upon one leg for an hour. Why, do you know that at school I was so celebrated for my pirouette, that I was nicknamed Tee-totum.

Sir S. Indeed!

Rat. Yes, I was. In short, I generally excel in all exercises that require agility, activity, and——Where's your charming niece? I don't see her any where.

Sir S. Why, I fancy she's in the garden; I'll show you the way, and, by passing through all the different walks, it's impossible but we must meet her, and, at the same time, see my new plantations.

Rat. [Aside.] There'll be no end to this. *[Aloud.]* I confess, uncle—I call you uncle, you see, already—I confess I don't like to see a garden, walk by walk, and alley by alley; there's no judging of it. What I like is, to see the arrangement—the tout ensemble.

Sir S. [Delighted.] Do you, though? Come, there you're quite right; I see you're a connoisseur.

Rat. Connoisseur! a very great one. I doat upon parks and gardens, but not in detail.

Sir S. Then I can satisfy you exactly. *[Going to the bureau, and taking up a paper.]* Here's the plan of my estate.

Rat. [Aside.] Gad! there's no beating him any how I see my fate; I'm doomed never to behold her!—A te-

dious old fool! [*Aloud.*] Bless me! this is a plan indeed. Beautiful!—What extent, too!

Sir S. [*Joyfully.*] Yes, yes; between sixty and seventy acres.

Rat. Seventy acres!—Charming! how delightful to ramble over—on paper! What's that large tinted space?

Sir S. What, don't you guess?

Rat. Oh, yes, to be sure!—How stupid I am! That's a piece of water, and charming it is, too. For my part, I wouldn't give a farthing for an estate without water; there's nothing like it.

Sir S. [*Piqued.*] I'm very sorry I didn't know of your taste before; for, unfortunately, there isn't one drop, nor any room for it.

Rat. No room!—What! seventy acres, and no room for a drop of water! Oh! I'll soon find room; you're no idea how skilful I am in these things—I'm a second capability Brown. What's that little round place there?

Sir S. That's a mountain.

Rat. A mountain!—There, now—a mountain! What the devil's the use of a mountain? There are lots of them every where. Take away the mountain, and substitute a little lake.

Sir S. A lake!—How?

Rat. And why not? I don't mean a lake of Geneva, but a lake in miniature.

Sir S. And how to fill it?

Rat. First of all, we'll have a boat; that'll take up some room.

Sir S. Room! yes; but how can we make use of it without water?

Rat. Oh! you can paddle about in it on rainy days; there's no lack of water in England. [*Aside, looking off.*] Heavens! there she is, at last!

Sir S. What's the matter?

Rat. Nothing. I thought that through the wood I could see—[*Aside.*] 'Tis she—'tis Louisa!

Sir S. Oh, yes, through the wood on this side you can. I have planted a row of the finest elms—do you see, to the left?

Rat. No; it seems to me that the finest view is on this side. [*Aside.*] I must speak to her, that I may know my fate.

Sir S. [*Explaining the plan.*] Well, now, here, you see, I pop my kitchen-garden quite out of sight.

Rat. [*Looking off.*] Not quite!

Sir S. Yes, but it is, though. Well, but here's what I pride myself on—my labyrinth. Why, do you know, though I made it myself, I often lose my way; for you see, by a sudden turn of the ground, you disappear in an instant.

Rat. [*Aside.*] Gad! I must make a bold push, or I shall lose my opportunity. [*Exit, hastily, c. D. F.*]

Sir S. [*Occupied on his plan.*] You understand, don't you? Here, you see, is the large meadow, and there, to the left—are you attending? [*Looking round.*] Eh! where is he? [*Calling.*] Grimshaw! Grimshaw! It's very odd! he has vanished like a shot! But, however, it's plain enough now; and I, who expected to find a man of taste, am disappointed. What levity! what stupidity! He's a coxcomb, too! His father wrote me word, that his peculiarity was hardly perceptible: it's the only striking thing I've seen about him. [*Calling.*] Jenny!

Re-enter JENNY, R.

Go and send my niece to me directly.

Jen. Yes, Sir Simon.

[*Exit, c. D. F.*]

Sir S. Poor Louisa! a pretty husband I was going to give her! Spite of the obligations I owe to the young man's father, I must find some mode—Apropos, this young widow, Lady Clifton, that I expect—she is intimate with the family. If she's a shrewd woman, now, and can help me to some plan for retracting my word, and getting rid of this troublesome being, her visit will be well-timed.

Enter LOUISA from the garden, c. D. F.

Lou. [*Aside.*] Jenny was right: how amiable he is! how he seems to love me!

Sir S. Oh! you are there, Louisa?

Lou. You sent for me, sir, did you not?

Sir S. Yes;—have you recovered a little from your alarm?

Lou. It was a weakness, sir, for which I was to blame. [*Hesitating.*] I have just seen him, and I begin to think—

Sir S. The same as myself, poor child!—You can't bear the sight of him.

Lou. What, sir, you find him——

Sir S. I find him hideously deformed, at least to my taste.

Lou. But that doesn't appear so much when he speaks, for he has eloquence.

Sir S. Not an atom!—And I have too much regard for your happiness to allow such a monkey as that to interfere with it. But how to withdraw my word without offending my old friend, Grimshaw? After all, it's his fault, not mine. What business had he to have a son with a hump-back?

[*Exit, L.*

Lou. But listen, uncle! How provoking! Now Mr. Rattleton and his clever scheme!—We shall be finely off! Oh, here he is!

Re-enter RATTLETON from the garden, c. d. f.

Rat. [*Looking about.*] He's gone! Well, my dear Louisa, your uncle is vanquished—taken by storm; and I only wait a word from you, that I may fly to him, and finally arrange our marriage.

Lou. One moment, sir: before you fix our wedding-day, it may be as well for you to ascertain whether or no your love be returned.

Rat. Ay, Louisa; love, indeed, must weave the chain that is to bind us together; and of love, at all events, there will be no deficiency, since I have sufficient for us both.

Lou. Aye, sir; but suppose, now, that my uncle should be insensible to your personal attractions?

Rat. Why, then, I should tell him, that neither grace, elegance, nor beauty, are indispensable to happiness; and even were they so, I may still be excused from possessing them, since you have sufficient for us both.

Lou. Very pretty, sir!—There is one thing unfortunately in opposition, which is, that my uncle, though vanquished—taken by storm, is at this moment seeking some honourable mode of getting rid of you.

Rat. Impossible!—His reasons?

Lou. He declares you are hideous, and he no longer wishes to have you for his nephew.

Rat. Really! [*Laughing.*] Ha! ha! ha!

Lou. Does that make you laugh?

Rat. To be sure it does, and with sufficient reason.—What, he doesn't like humps, eh? Then I am saved, and the real Grimshaw is lost; for I can disencumber myself whenever I please of the only fault with which I am reproached; while he, poor devil!—I pity him!

Re-enter JENNY, hastily, from the garden, c. d. f.

Jen. Oh, miss! such a misfortune!

Rat. What's the matter?

Jen. A gentleman has just arrived with one Lady Clifton.

Rat. Well?

Jen. Well, and who do you think, that I think it is?—
The real pretender himself!

Lou. Mr. Grimshaw?

Rat. What! my rival?—Excellent!—But on what do you ground your suspicions?

Jen. Why, as they entered the drawing-room, arm-in-arm, I heard them announced—"Lady Clifton and Mr. Grimshaw."

Rat. Oh, yes, it's the real Simon Pure, then, sure enough!

Lou. How to extricate yourself from this new dilemma?

Rat. Nothing so easy. Tell me, Jenny—you say you have seen him?

Jen. Yes, sir, I saw his back.

Rat. Well, now, without flattery, which is the ugliest, the most humpbacked of the two?

Jen. Oh, sir, without flattery, you—

Rat. [*Astonished.*] Eh?

Jen. Oh, sir, there's no comparison!—Why, he's quite a handsome man, with a fine figure, as upright as a dart!

Rat. What!—Come, you are joking, Jenny. What! has he no—

[*Showing his shoulder.*]

Jen. Oh! bless you, no, sir!

Rat. Are you quite sure you saw his back?

Jen. Yes, sir; I looked particularly, and, to my great surprise, there wasn't the least hint of such a thing.

Lou. What, then, could my uncle mean by what he said at breakfast this morning?

Rat. And this coat, too, which deceived me! Well, if it really belong to him, and he has no hump, all I can say is, that he must have a devilish bad tailor.

Jen. Oh! there's no relying on appearances;—all our remaining hope was in his hump, and now that's cut off—

Lou. [*Courtesying ironically.*] I leave, sir, in the hope that you will succeed as well in delighting Mr. Grimshaw, as you have in enchanting Sir Simon.

Jen. [*Looking off.*] Oh, gracious miss! they are coming this way!

[*Exeunt Louisa and Jenny, R.*]

Rat. Upon my word, a pretty situation I have brought myself into! [*Looking off.*] The lady is luckily alone; my rival, thank heaven! is not with her. One at a time is enough, in all conscience.

Enter LADY CLIFTON, L. U. E.

Lady C. [*Speaking off as she enters.*] I will return immediately.

Rat. [*Aside.*] Now I shall do very well.

Lady C. [*Aside.*] Now, then, to make acquaintance with this young Grimshaw. My cousin Emily Rochdale, it seems, is privately married to him, but afraid to own his marriage to his father; and he is obliged to feign a passion for Sir Simon's niece. [*Seeing Rattleton.*] Oh! this must be himself. [*Courtesying to him.*] I need not ask you, sir, if you are Mr. Grimshaw—I discovered you immediately.

Rat. [*Aside.*] The devil she did!

Lady C. Oh! don't be alarmed—I know all! Behold in me an ally about to assist you.

Rat. To assist me!—Upon my word, madam, you could not have arrived at a luckier moment. But how, not having the honour to be known to you, could you deign to take an interest in my affairs?

Lady C. We have never seen each other, it is true, but one word will explain. [*Very mysteriously.*] I am Lady Clifton—you understand!

Rat. Lady Clifton! [*Aside.*] Dear me! and who is Lady Clifton, I wonder?

Lady C. You did most wisely to address your letters to me. What is there I would not have done for you and for my dear cousin? I immediately came a journey of seventy miles to remove every obstacle.

Rat. [*Aside.*] Hang me if I understand one word—not a syllable!

Lady C. First inform me how you have conducted yourself in your embarrassing situation. How have you got on with Louisa and Sir Simon?

Rat. [*Aside.*] Well, this is the most embarrassing thing I ever met with! The lady and I are certainly far from understanding each other, and yet she seems thoroughly to enter into all my feelings. [*Aloud.*] Your ladyship will excuse me, I'm sure—I am so confounded! Of course, I am infinitely obliged to you for the long journey you have undertaken on my account; but, pray, who may the young man be who accompanied you?

Lady C. Oh! it is not a young man.

Rat. [*Aside.*] Then it is not my rival, after all! I breathe again!

Lady C. The young man is no other than your father !

Rat. My father !

Lady C. Himself ! I met him about eight miles hence at the last post, when he said, " I am going to Snipe Hall to meet my son." Judge of my surprise, since you had agreed that I should speak for you ! You have, then, altered your plans ?

Rat. Eh ?—Yes : it seems I have been wrong.

Lady C. Not at all—you have done perfectly right ; for, learning that you were here, I confessed to him the whole. Have I not acted wisely ?

Rat. Yes—yes ; I—[*Aside.*] This woman, with her incomprehensible favours, will drive me raving mad !

Lady C. At first he was furious, but finding that the mischief was done, he has given his consent.

Rat. Bless me ! what, then, he consents, does he ?—And may I ask to what ?

Lady C. Nearly to all you ask. Now, I will undertake everything relative to the family here, and do you act always in the same sense that we agreed upon in our correspondence.

Rat. Good ! I think you say, always in the same sense ?

Lady C. Now run to your father, who wishes to speak to you before he returns to town.

Rat. Oh ! my father who is just arrived with you ?—Let's make no mistake.

Lady C. Yes ; there he is in the row of poplars to the left.

Rat. I return your ladyship my best thanks, and will immediately—[*Aside.*] turn to the right !

[*Exit into the garden, R.*]

Lady C. Poor Grimshaw ! not dare to avow his marriage, even when his father consents ! Emily might truly write word that her husband was so fearful—so timid ; that is all well enough ; but, from the fear of enraging Sir Simon Snipe, to allow himself to be married a second time through timidity, was rather too good a joke.

Re-enter RATTLETON and LOUISA from the garden, C.D.F.

—he appears in earnest conversation with her.

There he is again ; but, really, for a timid young man, he speaks with an infinite deal of fire and vivacity. [*In a low tone to Rattleton, who comes forward.*] You have, then, forgotten what I said to you ?

Rat. No, certainly not; but I was explaining to the young lady——

Lady C. I will undertake all that. Your father is waiting for you. [*Looking off, L.*] Stay! this must surely be he.

Rat. [*Aside.*] Oh! the devil! [*Runs off, R.*]

Lou. What can be the matter with him?

Lady C. Nothing; but I believe your lover is a little fantastic—a little original.

Lou. Do you know him, madam?

Lady C. [*Smiling.*] Oh, much more than you think. Will you allow me, my dear Louisa, to ask you how you like him?

Lou. Oh! very well.

Lady C. Ah! I see you are easily pleased. And what was it he was saying to you so earnestly just now?

Lou. Oh, you may well imagine—keeping up his character of a true lover, and paying me his addresses.

Lady C. [*Astonished.*] Paying you his addresses!

Lou. Repeating that he loves me—that he adores me; you know it's always the same thing.

Lady C. What an indignity! Upon that point I am sorry to say you are deceived.

Lou. Deceived!—Oh, madam! you may fancy that you are in his confidence, but, believe me, I am much better informed. This disguise is only a stratagem—

Lady C. A stratagem!

Lou. Yes; this apparent deformity, which he has assumed for a few hours——

Lady C. For a few hours! He will find some little difficulty in laying it aside, I fancy!

Lou. What do you say?

Lady C. [*Showing her shoulder.*] That nothing is more genuine—more real.

Lou. What! and is he really——

Lady C. He has never been otherwise from his birth.

Lou. But Jenny, my maid, knows him, and has sworn——

Lady C. Oh, a servant he has bribed! [*Aside.*] My poor cousin Emily! how incensed I am! [*Aloud.*] But I will bring his father, and confound him before you all.

[*Exit, L. U. E.*]

Lou. I hardly know where I am! To be deceived in this manner, and by him!—by Jenny, too, in whom I placed such confidence!

Re-enter JENNY from the garden, C. D. F.

Oh! you are there, are you?

Jen. Yes, it's me, miss, come to report progress; every thing is in excellent train. First and foremost, I must tell you, the other Mr. Grimshaw is gone off in a huff; the lady I have discovered is for us; and Mr. Rattleton is now trying all he can to gain over Sir Simon. I am sure he must succeed. Has he not managed it cleverly?

Lou. [*Drily.*] You have said quite enough; and now you may go to the housekeeper, ask her for your wages, and depart. [*Crosses to L.*

Jen. Why, miss, is it possible you will discharge me, [*Crying.*] and without giving me any reason either?

Lou. Confess to me, then, that the young man you brought here this morning is not Mr. Rattleton.

Jen. But, miss——

Lou. Confess that his deformity—his defects are all real.

Jen. What, miss, do you want him to be humpbacked?

Lou. I insist upon it; your pardon is on this condition.

Jen. Well, then, miss, if it gives you pleasure—[*Aside.*] Mercy on me! what a droll taste!

Lou. What is the reason that you have so obstinately concealed it?

Jen. I hope, miss, you will pardon my ignorance; I'm sure I'd have told you, but I never knew till this moment that you'd like him so.

Re-enter SIR SIMON SNIPE and RATTLETON from the garden, C. D. F.

Rat. Yes, sir, believe me, your rigour will render two persons unhappy;—'tis the strict truth, and I am confident I do not flatter myself.

Sir S. I confess the assurance you have given me is not sufficient to persuade me, but I merely ask of you the permission to interrogate my niece, and refer it entirely to her.

Rat. This is all I myself desire; therefore, speak, I conjure you. You see, Sir Simon, I don't fear the truth. Now declare your sentiments in the most clear and positive manner.

Lou. Since, sir, you have set me an example of frankness, I shall follow it. I declare in the most clear and positive manner, that, with my consent, to you my hand never can be given.

Rat. [*Stupified.*] Hey! what do you say?

Jen. [*Aside.*] There, now, after all, she won't have him!

Rat. I really am quite at a loss to know to what to attribute this refusal.

Sir S. To what to attribute it? Deuce take it, man! look at yourself.

Rat. Well, what then? What has that to do with it?

Sir S. Young ladies are not so fond of deformed husbands.

Rat. [*Impatiently.*] Deformed!—I am no more so than you are!

[*Crosses to Louisa.*]

Sir S. Mr. Grimshaw, I have no pretensions to the Apollo Belvidere, but I'll be hanged if a child couldn't judge between us!

Rat. Ay, sir, but that is not the reason that deters your niece.

Lou. Yes, indeed, sir—that, and that alone.

Rat. [*Aside to Louisa.*] You must be joking—you, who know the truth!

Lou. Yes, sir, I do know it; and I know that you really are what you seem to be.

Rat. Impossible!—Jenny can attest——

Lou. Jenny herself has confessed——

Rat. What?

Jen. Yes, sir, I said you were humpbacked—she made me; and if you'll take my advice, you'll say so, too; for they don't like anything else here.

Rat. I'm lost in astonishment!

Lou. Nothing is more simple, sir. If this is a stratagem, and you can prove that you are not humpbacked, my hand is yours.

Rat. [*Going to take off his great coat.*] Oh! if that's all——

Sir S. [*Stopping him.*] A stratagem! a disguise!—Stay one instant, sir. If the gentleman is not a humpback, I withhold my consent.

Lou. As he pleases; but if the gentleman is, I'll not have him.

Sir S. And if the gentleman is not, I refuse him.

Rat. If that's the case, the gentleman must stay as he is for the present.

Jen. However, you must allow the gentleman to be something.

Rat. I see that it is equally dangerous for me to speak

or be silent. What does it matter, then, what I am?—No longer think of my person; behold only the sentiments which have urged me on;—and, since you both wish to hear the truth, learn that there is nothing real but my love for you, charming Louisa, and the sincere desire I had of pleasing you, Sir Simon—of meriting your esteem, and the hand of your niece. One thing, however, there is real—my presumption, which has never abandoned me, and which even at this moment makes me hope, that you will deign to pardon the faults that love alone has made me commit! [*Throws himself at Louisa's feet.*]

Jen. [*Aside to her.*] Now, miss, if you resist, it's all over with you!

Re-enter LADY CLIFTON, L. U. E.

Lady C. What do I see? Louisa! suffer at your feet a married man!

Sir S. A married man!

Lady C. Mr. Grimshaw is secretly married to Emily Rochdale, my cousin. By her I was charged to arrange the affair with his father and yourself.

Sir S. [*Indignantly.*] What, sir!

Rat. One instant, Sir Simon, suspend your anathema. You are all witnesses that Mr. Grimshaw is married; Lady Clifton herself declares it. [*To Lady Clifton.*] How kind this is of you! You, indeed, spoke the truth, when you announced yourself as my protectress! How I regret that you can no longer be my cousin!

Lady C. Sir!

Rat. Mr. Grimshaw being married, I beg leave to abdicate. I return him his name with many thanks, and, at the same time, I have even a more important restitution to make him.

Lou. What are you doing?

Rat. [*Taking off his great coat.*] I have now been lost so long, that, upon my soul, I'm by no means sorry to find myself again!

Sir S. And pray to whom have I now the honour of addressing myself?

Jen. Why, to Mr. Rattleton.

Rat. Yes, sir, George Rattleton, at your service. I took the liberty of borrowing the name of Mr. Grimshaw, with his great coat; there's the whole secret, and never was there a secret more troublesome to keep. You may now guess the reasons I have to implore your indulgence.

I know very well that a name, a fortune, and a respectable family, are insufficient to excuse my audacity, and to permit me to aspire to the hand of your niece; but if you will deign——

Sir S. It is to Louisa you must address yourself, and you know her prejudice——

Lou. Yes, against Mr. Grimshaw: I have none against Mr. Rattleton.

Jen. [*Aside.*] That's the first sensible thing she has said to-day!

Lady C. Doubtless, such a disguise is alone a sufficient mark of love.

Jen. I believe you, if you knew all the trouble it has cost us this morning.

Sir S. Without mentioning the courage to renounce natural advantages so evident—it's sublime!

Rat. Yes, sir; rail at me as much as you please; my back, as you have seen, can bear a great deal. I trust we shall soon be better acquainted; and when you know a little more of me, I hope you will have no reason to repent your kindness. [*To the Audience.*] And dare I also, without presuming too far on my very slight acquaintance here, venture to hope that you will not think I have, on this occasion, taken too much upon my shoulders; in which case, I trust, that, with study and assiduity, I may one day obtain some small share of your kind approbation.

DISPOSITION OF THE CHARACTERS AT THE FALL OF THE CURTAIN.

JENNY. LOUISA. SIR SIMON. LADY CLIFTON.

GEORGE RATTLETON.

R.]

[L.

THE END.

